

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1/ A metering machine comprising a frame on which a hopper is mounted that is organized to receive a food to be metered out, and that has a bottom in the vicinity of which at least one feed duct opens out for feeding food to a metering device, and at least one drum which has at least one radial chamber which opens out in the periphery of the drum, wherein the drum is mounted on the frame to pivot about an axis that is substantially perpendicular to the feed duct so as to bring the chamber into a suction position in alignment with the feed duct, and into a delivery position offset angularly relative to said feed duct, said frame having a stationary central hub on which a rotary ring is mounted, in which ring the chamber is provided radially so as to open out in an inside circumference and in an outside circumference of the ring, and wherein the drum is provided with means for sucking the food to be metered out into the chamber and for delivering the food out from the chamber, said means comprising a suction piston mounted on the hub to slide in alignment with the feed duct between a deployed position inside the chamber in register and a retracted position out of the chamber, and a delivery piston mounted on the hub to slide in a direction offset angularly relative to the feed duct between a deployed position inside the chamber in register and a retracted position out of the chamber in register.

2/ A metering machine according to claim 1, wherein, in the deployed position, the delivery piston has a front face that is flush with the outside circumference of the ring.

3/ A metering machine according to claim 1, wherein, in the retracted position, the suction piston has a front face that is flush with the inside circumference of the ring.

4/ A metering machine according to claim 1, wherein the ring is provided with a plurality of chambers organized in a manner such that when one of the chambers is in register with the suction piston, another of the chambers is in register with the delivery piston.

5/ A metering machine according to claim 4, wherein the pistons are associated with means for actuating them simultaneously to go between their deployed position and their retracted position.

6/ A metering machine according to claim 5, wherein the actuating means comprise two racks, each of which is secured to a respective one of the pistons, and a pinion which meshes with the racks and which is connected to an output shaft of a motor.

7/ A metering machine according to claim 1, wherein the drum is mounted on the frame to move between an active position in which the chamber is in register with the feed duct and an inactive position in which the drum is spaced apart from the feed duct.

8/ A metering machine according to claim 7, wherein the drum is mounted on the frame to pivot eccentrically between the active position and the inactive position about an axis that is substantially parallel to a diameter of the drum and perpendicular to the feed duct.